



Environmental Management Commission

Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2010

Meeting Location: Mid-America Regional Council, 2nd Floor, Westview Meeting Room

Commissioners present: Carol Adams, Bob Berkebile, Dustin Jensen, Marty Kraft, Jack Schrimsher, Jim van Eman, John Ware

Staff: Dennis Murphey, Jerry Shechter – OEQ; Matt Gigliotti – Law; Scott Cahail – Water Services

Guests: Sadie Gardner – BTG; Mike Hoey; Ron McLinden – Regional Transit Alliance; Patty Noll – City Planning & Development; Katherine Kelly – KC Center for Urban Agriculture

Carol Adams, Co-Chair, opened the meeting at 4:10 pm; a quorum was not present

A. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all Commissioners, staff and guests to the EMC meeting. Everyone introduced themselves.

B. Minutes of the meeting of February 17, 2010 were deferred.

C. City Initiatives re: urban agriculture – Patty Noll and Katherine Kelly

Patty Noll provided several handouts – Overview of efforts to change ordinances to support urban agriculture (UA), powerpoint – “Development Code: Tools to Enable Urban Agriculture”, and draft of proposed code changes numbered 88-805-06. Katherine Kelly provided a handout - “What Does Urban Agriculture Mean for Kansas City”.

The primary focus of the efforts to change the Development Code re UA is crops. The issue has been that, with a house on the property, then UA is an accessory and, therefore, cannot have volunteer labor or have people pick up purchased produce. Historically, the City has always allowed absentee farming on vacant lots. But – cannot sell or have others work there. City is working with people and organizations representing UA to review and address these and related issues. Groups involved include, as an example, those working on healthy food for kids. The goal is to resolve the two main issues. Patty reviewed the proposed draft ordinance changes. City staff expects the proposed changes to be in front of the City Plan Commission on April 20, 2010. Patty Noll asked the EMC to consider a letter of support for the changes. A letter of support will be considered at the next EMC meeting.

D. LEED Initiatives – John Ware and Jim van Eman

It has been suggested that, if the City intends to expand the use of LEED standards, there should first be an understanding of how the City has used LEED standards and how projects, developed to LEED standards, have performed. The agenda has been to extend the use of such standards to any developments with City financial support. John and Jim suggested an audit by the City that would chronicle the adoption of LEED standards, the operation of the LEED Standards Committee and building performance. It was suggested the EMC request an audit through the City Manager’s Office or the Council. The request would be framed as a question to be answered. Carol Adams asked John and Jim to bring back to the Commission suggested language for that question. The proposed language should be circulated with the next meeting agenda. Bob Berkebile asked about the objectives and any assumptions about such an audit of the process. There was general discussion about the concept. Jack Schrimsher noted the EMC is already convinced of the efficacy of employing LEED standards and that the emphasis should be on the buildings completed pursuant to the LEED ordinances (original in

2004 and revised in 2008). Emphasis should be on the benefits realized by the City. He also cautioned that a clear statement should be provided from the EMC to the OEQ as to what is requested and what is expected.

E. Office of Environmental Quality – Dennis Murphey

1. Dennis visited with Council representatives Cindy Circo and Jan Marcason re a no-idling ordinance for the city. Such an ordinance would be symbolic – as a statement supporting reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, ozone, etc throughout the city, and practical in being able to better partner with MARC and obtain “No Idling” signs to help educate the public. No idling will be part of this year’s air quality campaign by MARC. The consensus of those present was to support the program and, when appropriate, the proposed ordinance.
2. The US Department of Energy (DOE) sponsored a public hearing on the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) regarding a Mercury storage facility at which there was a good turn-out. DOE expects to finalize the EIS by Fall, 2010 and will then have a mandatory 30-day waiting period before finalizing the storage location. There should be an announcement before Thanksgiving.
3. OEQ and Johnson County are in the process of setting up a new, informal organization called the Heartland Local Government Sustainability Network. The network will be comprised of the various sustainability staffs across the 4-state region (Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa). Some of the staff positions are funded from federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG) while some are part of their general fund staff. Each needs to justify their positions in order to be continued. OEQ will approach EPA Region 7 to talk about funding for travel for meetings. The goal of the network is to make the position (and the concept) a fundamental part of local government.
4. There is a new federal initiative with a new HUD Office of Sustainable Communities that will be granting funding for detailed sustainability planning. Vehicles such as MARC, engaged in regional planning are the central focus of the initiative. Locally, such a grant can be founded on the MARC Adaptive Scenario planning effort.
5. The 2010 Environmental Achievement Awards process is under way with nominating requests having been sent out.
6. The 2010-1011 City budget will be adopted March 25, 2010. Many tough decisions are still in play.
7. OEQ will report next month on the status of the Electric Vehicle Project and the Plug-in Readiness Task Force.

F. Liaison Updates

1. Air Quality – Carol Adams – MARC has moved forward with the Adaptive Scenario and has realized resistance from several communities. Most push-back is focused on cooperation among the various jurisdictions, restrictions on greenfield development, and extension of utilities to potential economic growth areas. It is important to get the public to understand how important these issues are. Bob Berkebile spoke about Joel Kotkin’s new book re trends and impacts (accessible through the GKC Chamber of Commerce website) and the importance of developing visualization tools.

G. Project Updates – None

H. Old Business – Membership and Applications – Carol noted that the Commissioner’s terms detailed on the website may not be consistent with letters of appointment. The Chair asked everyone to try to find their individual letters of appointment so that the website site can be corrected. The Chair also asked Commissioners to give thought to new appointments to fill vacancies and to think about what skills, etc are needed. It was noted that the EMC should address business representation (the Chamber no longer has an active representative) and diversity.

I. New Business - None

J. Remarks and Announcements

The next monthly meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2010 at MARC at 4:00 pm.
The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm